

Reissue Application of

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INTRAVASCULAR CATHETER WITH A REPLACEABLE  
SHAFT SECTION

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INTRAVASCULAR CATHETER WITH A  
REPLACEABLE SHAFT SECTION

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention generally relates to the field of intravascular catheters which are advanceable over a guidewire into a desired region of a patient's vasculature, and particularly to an intravascular catheter which is advanceable into a patient's coronary arteries for therapeutic or diagnostic procedures therein.

In percutaneous transluminal coronary angioplasty (PCTA) procedures, a guiding catheter having a preshaped distal tip is percutaneously introduced by a Seldinger techniques into the cardiovascular system of a patient and advanced within the system until the preshaped distal tip of the guiding catheter is disposed within the ascending aorta adjacent the ostium of the desired coronary artery. The guiding catheter is relatively stiff and when it is twisted or torqued from its proximal end, which extends outside the patient, the distal tip of the guiding catheter may be guided into the desired coronary ostium. With the distal end of the guiding catheter well seated within the ostium of the desired coronary artery, a balloon dilatation catheter is introduced into and advanced through the guiding catheter and out the distal tip thereof into the patient's coronary artery until the balloon on the distal extremity of the dilatation catheter is properly positioned across the lesion to be dilated. Once properly positioned, the balloon is inflated one or more times to a predetermined size with radiopaque liquid at relatively high pressures (e.g., generally 4-12 atmospheres) to dilate the stenotic region of the diseased artery. When the dilations have been completed, the balloon is finally deflated so that the dilatation catheter can be removed from the dilated stenosis to allow the resumption of increased blood flow through the dilated artery.

One frequently used type of angioplasty catheter is an over-the-wire type catheter which has an inner lumen extending within the catheter shaft which is configured to slidably receive a guidewire which facilitates advancement of the catheter over the guidewire to the desired location within the patient's coronary arteries. The guidewire receiving inner lumen may extend the entire length of the catheter as in conventional over-the-wire catheters or only in the distal portion of the catheter between a distal guidewire port and a proximal guidewire port which is spaced a short distance proximally from the distal guidewire port and a substantial distance from the proximal end of the catheter as in rapid exchange type catheters.

It is not uncommon during an angioplasty procedure to exchange the dilatation catheter once the dilatation catheter has been advanced within the patient's arterial system. For example, if the physician determines that the inflated size of the balloon or the length of the balloon is inappropriate for the stenosis to be dilated, the dilatation catheter will be withdrawn and another, more appropriately sized dilatation catheter will be advanced into the coronary artery over the guidewire which remains in-place to dilate the stenosis. However, if the catheter is a conventional over-the-wire catheter, before the catheter is withdrawn either the guidewire in place must be replaced with an exchange wire, which is similar to the in-place guidewire except about twice as long, e.g. about 300 cm, as the normal guidewire or an extension wire about the same length as the in-place guidewire must be secured to the proximal end of the in-place guidewire to facilitate the withdrawal of the cath-

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What has been needed and heretofore unavailable is a system for easily changing a shaft section of an intravascular catheter without the need to discard the entire catheter. The present invention satisfies these and other needs.

The distal shaft section 42 of the above dilatation catheter may also be replaced when it is necessary or desirable to install a stent in a dilated stenotic region of the patient's artery to ensure that the region remains patent after the dilatation. In this case, the original distal shaft section is removed after the dilatation has been performed and a replacement distal shaft section having an inflatable balloon or other expandable means thereon with a stent mounted about the inflatable balloon or other expandable means. The catheter with the replacement distal shaft section is advanced within the arterial system of the patient until the

The above described advantages of the invention as well as others will become more apparent from the following detailed description of the invention when taken in conjunction with the accompanying exemplary drawings.

FIG. 4 is an elevational view of a distal portion of a balloon catheter embodying features of the invention with an expandable stent mounted on the balloon of the catheter with the balloon and the stent in expanded conditions within a stenotic region of a patient's artery.

A dilatation balloon 22 is provided on the replaceable distal section 13 which has an interior in fluid communication with the annular inner lumen 23 defined between the inner and outer tubular members 18 and 17 and the annular lumen 24 defined between the outer and inner tubular members 14 and 15 of the proximal section 12.

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the balloon 43 and out the distal end thereof. A guidewire 55 is slidably disposed within the guidewire receiving inner lumen 50. A radiopaque marker 56 is provided on the tubular extension 54 at the midpoint between the two ends of the balloon 43 to facilitate the fluoroscopic observation thereof within the patient.

The distal shaft section 42 of the catheter 40 may be replaced as in the previously described embodiment, the only major difference being that there is no need for an extension wire to facilitate withdrawal of the original catheter 40 and the introduction of the replacement catheter with a different distal section.

FIG. 4 illustrates a replacement distal section 60 similar to the distal section 42 shown in FIG. 3 but adapted to deliver an expandable stent 61 to a stenotic region of a patient's artery to provide long term patency. Once the stent 61 is properly expanded, the balloon 63 may be deflated and the catheter withdrawn from the patient. This particular embodiment may be utilized after dilatation of the stenotic region by means of a catheter of the invention such as shown in FIG. 3. In this instance, after the dilatation, the dilatation catheter may be withdrawn, the distal section 42 removed from the proximal shaft section 41 by disengaging the threaded ends of the proximal shaft section and connector element 48 and securing the replacement distal section 60 to the threaded end of proximal shaft section by threadably engaging the connector element 64 with female threads 65 to the distal end of the proximal shaft section with male threads 46. The replacement catheter with the distal section 60 may then be advanced into and through the patient's arterial system over the guidewire 66 until the balloon 63 is disposed across the stenosis. Expansion of the balloon 63 within the stenosis expands the stent 61 to hold open the stenotic region of the patient's artery. The catheter can then be removed with the stent remaining within the dilated arterial passageway to maintain its patency.

The catheter construction and the materials of the various portions thereof may be conventional. Moreover, while the invention is described herein in terms of certain preferred embodiments, a variety of modification can be made. For example, threaded connections are described between the proximal and distal shaft sections to facilitate separation of the distal shaft section from the proximal shaft section. However, other types of connections are contemplated with the present invention, the threaded connection being a presently preferred embodiment. Other connections include projections and corresponding detentes. Additionally, while replacement of the distal shaft section is primarily described herein, those skilled in the art will recognize that the proximal shaft section may be the replaceable shaft section. Other modifications and improvements may be made to the invention without departing from the scope thereof.

What is claimed is:

1. An intravascular catheter with an exchangeable shaft section, comprising:
  - a) an elongated tubular proximal shaft section having proximal and distal ends and a first inner lumen extending therein;
  - b) an elongated distal shaft section having proximal and distal ends, a port in the distal end of the distal shaft section, a second inner lumen extending therein in fluid communication with the first inner lumen in the proximal shaft section and a third inner lumen which is configured to slidably receive a guidewire and which extends therein to the port in the distal end of the distal shaft section; and

c) means to releasably interconnect the distal end of the proximal shaft section and the proximal end of the distal shaft section to effect fluid communication between the first and second inner lumens.

5 2. The intravascular catheter of claim 1 wherein an inflatable dilatation balloon is provided on the distal shaft section having an interior in fluid communication with the second inner lumen in the distal section.

3. The intravascular catheter of claim 1 wherein the  
10 connector means includes male threads on an end of one of the shaft sections and female threads on a mating end of the other shaft section which are configured to threadably engage the male threads.

4. The intravascular catheter of claim 1 wherein the  
15 tubular proximal shaft section includes an inner tubular member disposed therein which has a fourth inner lumen which is configured to slidably receive a guidewire therein and which is in communication with the third inner lumen in the distal shaft section.

20 5. The intravascular catheter of claim 2 wherein means are provided on the proximal end of the proximal section for directing fluid through the first inner lumen extending therein and the second inner lumen in the distal section into the interior of the balloon.

25 6. A dilatation catheter with an exchangeable shaft section, comprising:

a) an elongated proximal shaft section having proximal and distal ends and an first inner lumen extending therein to the distal end;

30 b) an elongated distal shaft section having proximal and distal ends, a second inner lumen extending from the proximal end of the distal shaft section to a location spaced proximally from the distal end of the distal shaft section, a distal port in the distal end, a third inner  
35 lumen extending therein to and being in fluid communication with the distal port and being coextensive and parallel with at least part of the second inner lumen;

40 c) means to releasably connect the distal end of the proximal shaft section to the proximal end of the distal shaft section to effect fluid communication between the first inner lumen of the proximal shaft section and the second inner lumen of the distal shaft section; and

45 d) an inflatable dilatation balloon on the distal shaft section having an interior in fluid communication with the second inner lumen.

7. The dilatation catheter of claim 6 wherein the connecting means include male threads on an end of one of the shaft sections and matching female threads on a mating end of the  
50 other shaft section.

8. The dilatation catheter of claim 7 wherein the proximal shaft section includes inner and outer tubular members, the distal shaft section includes inner and outer tubular members and the threaded connecting means are on mating ends of the inner tubular members of the proximal and distal shaft  
55 sections.

9. The dilatation catheter of claim 7 wherein the proximal shaft section includes inner and outer tubular members, the distal shaft section includes inner and outer tubular members and the threaded connecting means are on mating ends of the outer tubular members of the proximal and distal shaft  
60 sections.

10. A balloon catheter with an exchangeable shaft section, comprising:

65 a) an elongated proximal shaft section having proximal and distal ends and an first inner lumen extending therein to the distal end;

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- b) an elongated distal shaft section having proximal and distal ends, a second inner lumen extending from the proximal end of the distal shaft section to a location spaced proximally from the distal end of the distal shaft section, a distal port in the distal end of the distal shaft section, a third inner lumen extending within the distal shaft section to the distal port and a third inner lumen extending therein coextensive and parallel with at least part of the second inner lumen and being in fluid communication with the distal port;
  - c) means to releasably connect the distal end of the proximal shaft section and the proximal end of the distal shaft section to effect fluid communication between the first inner lumen of the proximal shaft section and the second inner lumen of the distal shaft section; and
  - d) an inflatable balloon on the distal shaft section having an interior in fluid communication with the second inner lumen.
11. The balloon catheter of claim 10 including an expandable stent which is mounted about the inflatable balloon in an uninflated condition and which is configured to expand upon the inflation of the balloon.
12. A method of treating a patient's body lumen, comprising:
- a) providing an intraluminal catheter which has an elongated catheter shaft, a proximal shaft section, a replaceable distal shaft section and means to releasably connect the replaceable distal section with the proximal shaft section;
  - b) advancing the intraluminal catheter through a patient's body lumen until the catheter is disposed within a desired region thereof;
  - c) performing an intraluminal procedure within the body lumen with the intraluminal catheter;
  - d) withdrawing the intraluminal catheter from the patient;
  - e) removing the replaceable distal shaft section of the intraluminal catheter;
  - f) connecting a replacement distal shaft section to the proximal shaft section; and
  - g) advancing the intraluminal catheter with the replacement distal shaft section into the patient's body lumen until the intraluminal catheter is disposed within a desired region of the patient's body lumen.
13. A method of treating a patient's body lumen, comprising:
- a) providing a dilatation catheter which has an elongated catheter shaft, a replaceable distal shaft section, a dilatation balloon on the replaceable distal shaft section, a proximal shaft portion and means to connect the proximal and distal shaft sections;
  - b) advancing the dilatation catheter through the patient's vasculature until the dilatation balloon is disposed within a stenotic region of a patient's artery;
  - c) withdrawing the dilatation catheter from the patient;
  - d) removing the replaceable distal shaft section of the catheter; and
  - e) connecting a replacement distal shaft section to the proximal shaft section; and
- advancing the catheter with the replacement distal shaft section into the patient's vasculature until the catheter



is disposed within a desired region of the patient's vasculature.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein the replacement distal shaft section has an inflatable balloon with an expandable stent mounted about the inflatable balloon and when the inflatable balloon and stent mounted thereon are disposed within the desired region of the patient's vasculature, inflating the balloon to expand the stent within the desired region of the vasculature and then deflating the balloon so that the catheter can be removed, leaving the expanded stent within the patient's vasculature.

15. A dilatation catheter comprising:

- a) an elongated catheter shaft having proximal and distal ends, a guidewire port in the distal end, a guidewire receiving inner lumen extending to and being in fluid communication with the guidewire port and an inflation lumen extending to location proximal to the distal end;
- b) a proximal shaft section having proximal and distal ends and at least part of the inflation lumen extending therein to the distal end of the proximal shaft section; and
- c) a replaceable distal shaft section having a proximal end, being releasably connected by said proximal end of the distal shaft section to the distal end of the proximal shaft section, at least part of the inflation lumen extending within the distal shaft section distally therein from the proximal end of the distal shaft section to the location proximal to the distal end of the catheter shaft; and
- d) a dilatation balloon on the distal shaft section surrounding the location having an interior in fluid communication with the portion of the inflation lumen extending within the distal shaft section.

16. An intravascular catheter comprising:

- a) a proximal shaft section having a proximal end, a distal end and an inner lumen extending therein;
- b) a distal shaft section having a proximal end, a distal end, a port in the distal end, a second inner lumen extending therein in fluid communication with the inner lumen of the proximal shaft section and a third inner lumen extending parallel and at least partially coextensive with the second inner lumen within the distal shaft section and in fluid communication with the port in the distal end of the distal shaft section; and
- c) means to releasably connect the proximal end to the distal shaft section to the distal end of the proximal shaft section.

17. The intravascular catheter of claim 16 wherein the distal shaft section is releasably connected to the proximal shaft section by means of interconnecting threads on the distal end of the proximal shaft section and on the proximal end of the distal shaft section.

18. The intravascular catheter of claim 17 wherein the threads on the distal end of the proximal shaft section are male threads and the mating threads on the proximal end of the distal section are female threads.

19. The intravascular catheter of claim 17 wherein the proximal section is a metallic tube.

20. The intravascular catheter of claim 19 wherein the metallic proximal shaft section has male threads on the distal end thereof.

21. The intravascular catheter of claim 17 wherein the means to releasably connect the proximal end of the distal

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shaft section to the distal end of the proximal shaft section includes an intermediate tubular element which has proximal and distal ends, threads on at least one of said ends which match the threads on the mating end of one of the shaft sections with the other of said ends of the intermediate tubular element being secured to the mating end of the other shaft section.

22. The intravascular catheter of claim 21 wherein threads are on the proximal end of the intermediate tubular element and the distal end of the proximal shaft section.

23. The intravascular catheter of claim 21 wherein threads are on the distal end of the intermediate tubular element and the proximal end of the distal shaft section.

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24. A method for performing a medical procedure using a catheter comprising the steps of:

a) providing a catheter with a first catheter shaft section having a proximal end, a distal end and a first inner lumen extending therein to a location proximal to the distal end, a second catheter shaft section disposed proximal to the first catheter shaft section having a proximal end, a distal end and an inner lumen extending therein and a releasable connection between the distal end of the second catheter shaft section and the first catheter shaft section with the inner lumen within the first shaft section being in fluid communication with the inner lumen within the second catheter shaft section;

b) inserting the catheter into a patient over a guidewire disposed in part within the patient, with at least a portion of the second catheter shaft section extending out of the patient, to perform a medical procedure;

c) pulling the portion of the second shaft section extending out of the patient over the guidewire to withdraw at least part of the catheter shaft from the patient; and

d) disengaging one of the catheter shaft sections from the other catheter shaft section.

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25. An intravascular catheter which comprises proximal and distal ends, a port in the distal end, a balloon connected to an inflation lumen, said balloon being carried adjacent said distal end, a guidewire lumen extending within the catheter to the port in the distal end, said catheter comprising a plurality of segments having connectors which are secured together in end-to-end relations to form said catheter, but which are both separable into separated segments by the user.

26. The method of removing an intravascular catheter from a patient's vascular system over a guidewire, which comprises: grasping said catheter and grasping said guidewire; partially withdrawing said catheter out of the vascular system of the patient while restraining the guidewire from retracting movement; removing a proximally mounted section of said catheter from the remainder of said catheter, and separately sliding said catheter section off of the guidewire while substantially continuously grasping the guidewire to prevent retracting movement thereof.

27. A method for withdrawing a catheter from a patient's vascular system, which comprises the steps of:

a) introducing a guidewire into said vascular system;

b) advancing a catheter in said vascular system over said guidewire,  
said catheter having at least a distal section and a proximal section releasably  
connected to the distal section;

c) withdrawing said catheter from said vascular system over said  
guidewire by first removing said proximal section while restraining said  
guidewire; and

d) thereafter removing said distal section while restraining said  
guidewire.

28. A catheter for introduction into and withdrawal from the vascular  
system of a patient over a guidewire in said vascular system, which comprises:

a) said catheter having a distal section and a proximal section;

b) said distal section and said proximal section being  
alternatively connectable and separable; and

c) said catheter being adapted for introduction into said  
vascular system over said guidewire and for withdrawal from said vascular  
system over said guidewire by removing said proximal section while restraining  
said guidewire and thereafter removing said distal section while restraining said  
guidewire.

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